

FreeThought

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED RATIONALIST MONTHLY

X CONVENTION SPECIAL ISSUE



Bangalore University Goes to dogs... thanks to "Gods"!

Vol. VIII, No. 5 May, 78 Single Copy 80 P. Annual Subscription Rs. 9

God is a Myth, Immortality an Illusion, Religion a Gigantic Fraud

Letters...

Freethought

Sir,

Your magazine is doing yeoman service to humanity. I derive much information and want to contribute lot of money but since I am a refugee (destitute) and became a victim of the Communal fury when Allah Mian and Bhagwan were at loggerheads in the plains of Punjab in 1947. So much so, that I came here barefooted and since then I have not reestablished myself properly. Anyway still I will contribute my mite. Please accept congratulations for good articles and service you are doing.

Roshan Lal Soni, Chh ndwara, M.P.

★

Sir,

The articles which the monthly carries are more truthful and up to my satisfaction. The criticism therein had to be welcomed by one and all and I congratulate the Association Members for bringing out this magazine with devotion. I appeal to all the youth to take the opportunity of reading FREE THOUGHT and carry forward the ideals and material facts for the benefit of mankind.

T. Kotaiah, Nellore.

★

Sir,

I could not reconcile myself with the article 'A confrontation with the Ghost' written by a rationalist like Mr. Dinesh Netar when it goes all along with the irrational supposition that the 'ghost' talks when it does not exist.

In our noble effort to eliminate superstitions even for fun sake, let us not follow such irrational ways for expressing our ideas.

R. Chandrasekaran, K. P. Patti.

★

Godmen

I quiet appreciate the improvement in the quality of FREETHOUGHT, but much more remains to be done to counteract the damage caused by the so called GODMEN and instill a rational and scientific outlook in the masses without which we cannot expect to make any material progress and improve the horrible living conditions of the masses. The fight between, good and evil is a relentless continuous battle and there cannot be any let up. RELIGION OPIATES THE MASSES AND RATIONALISM AWAKENS THE MASSES.

Dr. V. Prabhakara Rao. Rajahmundry. by the Bureau —Editor)

Netaji, Baba And Yagna

Sri,

It is shocking that in a period of acute economic crisis, more than a crore of rupees have been wasted on a religious yagna in Ahmedabad. The yagna was held in Ahmedabad for making Gujarat a den of Hindu superstition is true. One of the reasons why Baba Jai Guru Deo held it in Gujarat is that he could not have held it in his home State of UP because he had been unmasked there three years ago. Then, his disciples had organised a mass rally at a park in Kanpur in which Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was to appear. A news of this kind was circulated in public that Netaji was nobody else than Baba himself. A large amount of money was collected from the public. At the eleventh hour the fraud was exposed. Baba succeeded in escaping. He was later arrested. The inscription on Baba's seat in UP reveals is communal and obscurantist character,

ANAND 'PARUSH Allahabad.

★

Women and Dowry

Sir, My name is.....My date of birth is 30-6-1917. I am working as a secondary grade teacher. I am a Roman Catholic. My native place is Tinneveli Dt. I have no father. I have two brothers and one sister. I am the third one. My first brother is a teacher like me. My second brother M. A. B. T. is working at Madras. He is there with his family. I am working for the past 6 years there was no rain in our place. So, we incurred a lot of debts because of digging wells in our farm. We paid the debts with our salaries for five years. Now only we are free from debts.

Many men came. They asked a lot of dowry. Now I have jewels for three thousand rupees. Still, I will get jewels for two thousand rupees. Money is ready for it. I want a graduate or D.M.E. bride groom from any caste under 35.

Dear Sir, please take pity on this poor girl. I expect your kind reply very soon. Now in this world no man accepts a poor girl. If I get a reply from you, I will write to my brothers with happiness.

(The above is an unedited pathetic letter written by an unmarried girl to the Inter-marriage Bureau of I. R. A. For obvious reasons her name is not being published. Should our men even in 1970's demand and depend upon dowry from the Brides? This is only a specimen of many such letters being received

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

"Religion in Asia produces, too, a sense of the past rather than of the present, a sense of looking backward. Much of Asia is possessed by demonology".

John Gunther,
American News Writer

Editorial

Our Irrational Scientists

—M. A. Devassikutty

Message for X Convention

Genesis of I.R.A.—A. Suryanarayana

A. P. Renaissance Samiti

Bible as a Guide—Dr. A. T. Kovoov

Woman the Predestined—Ms. M. Bhatti

How Ignorant are they?—Prem K. Sahil

Home truth for U. K. Racists

Stigmata—P. K. Narayanan

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Freethought

ON TO PALGHAT!

It is in the fitness of things that the tenth convention of Indian Rationalists is held in Palghat. Rationalist movement, from all indications is about the strongest in Kerala today though it is in this state that one finds a fair distribution of the three major religions. Kerala can boast of rationalists evolving from among Hindus, Muslims and Christians alike.

It is again our Kerala comrades who have in more recent days exhibited militant rationalism—reminiscent of Periyar, E. V. R.'s days. The recent protests at Guruvayoor temple and radio stations are salutary beginnings. Inspite of unashamed goondaism of the "faithfuls", the rationalists voiced their protest to evoke sympathy amongst fellow rationalists and non-rationalists alike.

Much more needs to be done. Mere intellectual exercise may not suffice. Caste domination is rearing its ugly head. Casteistic economic exploitation is sought to be justified on the ground of 'intellectual superiority' (which is nothing but the byproduct of centuries of exploitation)

Religion is being used as veritable opium and is being doled out to destroy intellectual curiosity, to suppress social discontent and to quell revolution by the dispossessed.

There cannot be a more pressing moment for the holding of the convention. Let us devote all our time and energy for ushering in RATIONALISM by joining hands with like-minded people.

★

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C. A. SESHADRI



WITH BEST COMPLIMENTS
TO
INDIAN RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION
&
KERALA RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION

on the occasion of the
**X CONVENTION OF INDIAN RATIONALISTS &
V KERALA YUKTHIVADI ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

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Let Reason Prevail upon Superstition

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MAY

OUR IRRATIONAL SCIENTISTS

by M. A. Devassikutty



We boast of our country as having the third largest number of scientists. Our politicians do not miss an opportunity to emphasise this point possibly to prove that ours is a modern nation. It would, however, be a good pastime to speculate how rational (or irrational) our scientists are.

Take the average science teacher in a school or college. He can be found teaching Darwin's theory of evolution at the College and Manu's theory at home, yet maintaining

his poise and equilibrium. He is capable of closing his eyes ostrich-like to the apparent contradiction and inventing a so-called 'synthesis' between the two.

It is common knowledge that most of our scientific know-how is borrowed from other countries. In spite of ours being one of the countries with the largest number of scientists our contribution to scientific progress is negligible. Instead of becoming scientific 'trail blazers' our scientists assume the role of 'scientific mercenaries'. The reason is that like most of our people our scientists have not made any effort to get rid of their ancestral superstitions and faith in the supernatural instilled into them when young by the general conditioning process exercised by their parents, teachers and priests. Though in later years they learnt to exercise their reason and to adopt a critical attitude toward certain aspects which they investigated in their laboratories, when they come across those aspects which they did not investigate, they felt helpless and joined the crowd in singing the praise of the supernatural. Such an attitude on the part of many of our scientists has given a handle to the religionists to the detriment of science.

Our scientists, like our people in general, are burdened with the weight of the deadwood of primitive, irrational ideas and taboos, thought to be inviolable and dutifully handed down from generation. Even the high education they had has not helped them to free their minds from the stranglehold of these pernicious ideas. If this is the condition of the cream of our society what can be said of the ordinary god-fearing people of our country who waste millions of man-hours daily cringing, crawling, kneeling and rolling before some imaginary deity or the other.

Superstition, manifested in all its variations, upheld by spiritual forgery and encouraged by

political thuggery has been the bane of this land of ours.

How many of our scientists can claim to have adopted a mental attitude which unreservedly accepts the supremacy reason and rejects all arbitrary assumptions of authority? it is a fact that many indian scientists settled abroad have made brilliant contributions to scientific progress. Lack of facilities has been attributed to be the sole cause for the lack-lustre performance of our scientists at home. This is far from true. A true and correct analysis of

the situation would doubtlessly show that the low-key performance of our scientific community is not so much because of the lack of facilities in this country as because of their irrational and indifferent attitude. It is a direct result of the harmful debilitating influence that the spiritual forgers of the country are able to exert on the minds of our scientists. How true this view is can be seen by the way many of our top scientists run after self-styled Bhagwans and Gurus, Babas and Saints who abound this country.

★

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to Palghat (Kerala) for the X Convention

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By

MALAMPUZHA TRAVELS & KERALABHUMI PUBLICATIONS

PALGHAT KERALA

PHONE : 8294

Messages for X Convention

The following are some of the messages received from all over India for the success of the X Convention of Indian Rationalists. Some more will be published in the next issue.

★ ★ ★
From President of I. R. A.

"It is a great disappointment to me that I will not be able to be in your midst due to ill health and severe weakness.

We have seen the end of the emergency and restoration of freedom and fundamental rights. But what do we see around us? People, right from the educated to the illiterate are united in their irrationalism, blind faith and superstitions. Temples and mosques are rising up in hundreds every year. The spirit of Reformism and Rationalism is confined to very few among the elderly people. The young by and large are oblivious towards the plight of the downtrodden. The journey to Rationalism is very long and arduous. Every one of us has to shoulder the responsibility of educating a citizen in literacy and in the course of this towards reason and scientific thinking. Look at the response we get? Our so-called fashionable RATIONAEISTS are only hypocrites and they crawl before their dilities when put to test. This is sheer hypocrisy and a nation of hypocrites and dishonest people will have to undergo many social upheavals before the dawn of reason. We are so few and far between but let us hold on together with inner confidence. A day will surely come when people will appreciate the soundness of our strength. Till this time comes let us remain united and serve and sacrifice to our utmost capacity. I wish the Convention every success in evolving practical programmes and deliberations."

(Sd.) Kamala Shankar Pandya

★ ★ ★
From Vice President of India

April 21, 1978

Vice President,
India New Delhi

I send my best wishes for the success of the X Convention of the Indian Rationalists Association to be held at Palghat from the 13th May 1978.

(Sd.) B. D. Jatti

★ ★ ★
A Cable Received from Ms. Barbara Smoker London
WISHING YOUR TENTH CONVENTION EVERY SUCCESS
MAY YOU GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

BARBARA SMOKER, PRESIDENT.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY GREAT BRITAIN

From Governor of Orissa

RAJ BHAVAN
BHUBANESWAR
27th April 1978

Governor, Orissa

I am glad to know that under the auspices of Indian Rationalist Association, Madras the Kerala Rationalist Association will host the X Convention of Indian Rationalists at Palghat on 13 and 14 May 1978 and a special journal will also be brought out on the occasion.

I wish the Convention all success.

(Sd.) Bhagwat Dayal Sharma

★ ★ ★
From Governor of Karnataka

RAJ BHAVAN BANGALORE
PIN: 560 001
24th April 1978

Karnataka Governor's
Secretariat
Dear Sir,

The Governor is glad to learn that under the auspices of Indian Rationalist Association, the Kerala Rationalist Association will be organising the Xth Convention of Indian Rationalists at Palghat on 13th and 14th May 1978 and that you are bringing out a Special Issue of your Journal 'FREETHOUGHT' to commemorate the Convention. He sends his good wishes on this occasion.

Yours faithfully,
(Sd.) S. Somanath
Under Secretary to Governor

★ ★ ★
From Union Minister for Railways

No. MA/103078
PRIVATE SECRETARY TO
MINISTER OF RAILWAYS
INDIA
NEW DELHI
April 25, 1978

Dear Sir,

I am desired by the Minister of Railways to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 15-4-78 regarding the X CONVENTION OF INDIAN RATIONALISTS being held at Palghat on 13th & 14th May 1978. The Railway Minister sends his best wishes for the success of the Convention and eagerly awaits the report of the deliberations.

Thanking you.

Yours faithfully,
(Sd.) T. R. Ramakrishnan

From P. W. D. Minister of Kerala

It is learnt that the 10th and 5th annual conferences of IRA and KRA respectively will begin on 12th May 78.

To a certain extent the KRA could reach the message of free thinking and modern ideas to the people whose minds were full of superstitions and anti social customs. But inspite of a united movement the propaganda of rational thinking has not yet spread as widely as we expected. But the Indian Rationalist's Conference which will be held at Palghat in the second week of May 78 will give zeal and zest to actions of this kind.

My best wishes for the successful conduct of the conference.

K. Pankajakshan

★ ★ ★

From Com. E. M. S.

CAMP: PALGHAT
25th April 1978

Friends,

My hearty congratulations to your conferences which will be held in the 2nd week of May at Palghat. It is quite inevitable for our people to struggle against the antisocial customs and superstitions, while trying to build a modern society based on democracy. Let the conferences at Palghat strengthen the same.

E. M. S. Nambudripad

★ ★ ★

From Mr. Premnath Bazaz, a noted Author

I am sorry my physical condition does not permit me to under take the long journey and be present in the convention. I feel I shall miss a great opportunity to meet a number of friends with whom I desire to exchange views on various matters.

However, I wish the convention a grand success because I believe the bright future of India depends on widespread rational outlook of our people. Until the religious mode of thinking is smashed there is no hope for this country.

★ ★ ★

From C. M. of Kerala

TRIVANDRUM
26th April 1978

A. K. Antony
Chief Minister Kerala

I send my hearty greetings and good wishes to the special issue of FREETHOUGHT proposed to be brought out in connection with the 10th Convention of Indian Rationalists to be held at Palghat in May 1978.

(Sd.) A. K. Antony

X Convention of Indian Rationalism

PROGRAMME

13-5-78 (Venue : TOWN HALL)

From To

9-00 9-30 ... Registration.

9-30 11-15 ... INAUGURAL SESSION

Welcome address by
Mr. P. Sankar, M. L. A.
(Chairman of the Reception Committee).

Presidential address by
Mr. Kamala Shankar
Pandya (President of
I. R. A.)

Report on the Rationalist
Movement by Mr. A.
Suryanarayana (General
Secretary of I. R. A.)

Inaugural address by Dr.
H. Narasimhaiah (former
Vice-Chancellor of
Bangalore University).

Vote of thanks by Mr. U.
Kalanathan (Convener,
Reception Committee).

11-15 11-30 ... Coffee break.

11-0 13-00 ... "MY CONTRIBUTION
TO RATIONALIST
MOVEMENT.

Self Introduction by
Delegates.

President Mr. M. V.
Ramamurthy, Hydera-
bad (Vice President,
I. R. A.)

13-00 15-00 ... Lunch break.

15-00 17-00 ... "INFLUENCE OF
CASTE SYSTEM IN
INDIAN SOCIETY"

Presentation of papers
President : Mr. P. K.
Mukherji, New Delhi
(President, Delhi Ratio-
nalist Association)

17-30 18-30 ... PROCESSION
by Members of Kerala
Rationalist Association
and Convention Dele-
gates.

18-30 21-00 ... PUBLIC MEETING
(at Town Hall itself).

14-5-78 (Venue: (ROTARY MOYAN HALL)

9-30 11-00 ... "HOW TO MOBILISE
RATIONALIST FOR-
CES?"

—Discussion

President: Prof. A. M.
Dharmalingam, Banga-
lore (President of
Karnataka Rationalist
Association)

Mr. M. Prabha, Trivan-
drum (former President
of K. R. A.) will initiate
the discussion.

11-00 11-30 ... Coffee break.

11-30 13-00 ... "HOW TO SECULA-
RISE INDIA?"

—Discussion

President : Mr. C. A.
Seshadri (Editor,
FREETHOUGHT) Mr.
Kurup, Bombay (Secre-
tary, Bombay Ratio-
nalist Association) will
initiate the discussions.

13-00 15-00 ... Lunch break.

15-00 17-00 ... CONCLUDING
SESSION

Passing Resolutions, con-
stitution of sub-com-
mittees, etc.

President: Mr. Velayu-
tham Pillai, Ernakulam
(President of Kerala
Rationalist Association)

S. L. Bharathi, Vice Pre-
sident, IRA will move
the Resolutions

Vote of thanks by Mr.
M. R. Subramaniam
(Secaletour, Reception
Committee).

18-00 21-00 ... "HYPNOREMA" by
Prof. Hypno and
MAGIC by Prof. R. K.
Malayath.

Note:—The convention will be preceded
by the V. Kerala Yukthivadi Annual
Conference on 12-5-78.

GENESIS OF I. R. A.

—A. Suryanarayana

(A. Suryanarayana, who is employed as Regional Internal Auditor in Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., Madras is the General Secretary of I.R.A. —Editor)

Many Rationalists—perhaps, even many of the Members of the Indian Rationalists Association, may not be aware of the origin of I.R.A. Though technically the Association was founded only in 1949 at Madras, the background and its foundation date back to as early as 1930.

It was on 2nd March 1930, an Association called ANTI PRIESTCRAFT ASSOCIATION was established at a Public Meeting of the citizens of Bombay held at the Students' Brotherhood Hall, with Dr. G. V. Deshmukh in the chair. This meeting appointed a provisional Committee to draw up a draft constitution and to enrol members, the subscription being provisionally fixed at Rs. 5/- per annum for ordinary members and four annas (25 paise in decimal coinage) for student Members. This Committee placed before the General Body its draft constitution on 30th March 1930 when the constitution was discussed and adopted. The office bearers and the first Executive Council Members for the year 1930 were also then elected.

The Association started off very well by enrolling as many as 62 members by the end of December 1930. Of these three were Life Members, 43 ordinary members and 16 student members. In the very first year of its inception itself the Association held a public meeting supporting the depressed classes in their fight against the orthodox section and also issued an appeal in the press. Two public lectures were delivered. Mr. Meghenian spoke on the 'MYTH OF IMMORTALITY' and Dr. D. Avoine on the MIRACLES OF LOURDES.

The newly born Association addressed letters to the Secretaries of the debating societies of different colleges in Bombay informing them of the desire of the Association to send lecturers to their meetings, as a result of which they received invitations from the Ismailia college, Andheri and from the Elphinstone college. Dr. D. Avoine spoke on the 'ORIGIN

OF LIFE' and Mr. Masani participated in a debate, the subject being 'ORGANIZED RELIGION HAS DONE SEVERAL HARMS, THAN GOOD!

The Association appointed a propaganda sub-committee which took advantage of the local press to fight priestcraft and superstitions. Dr. Deshmukh wrote a series of articles on Hindu Marriage Rites and Dr. D. Avoine on 'SCIENCE AND RELIGION' while Mr. G. K. Nariman, Mr. D. R. D. Wadia and Mr. J. M. Cooper attacked Orthodox Parsee and Jewish customs. Besides these, Dr. D. Avoine Mr. J. M. Cooper also wrote on Catholics and Politics, Astrology, Spiritualism, Swedeenlo gism, Christian Science etc.

The Association also supported the members of the Vasi and Kajiji families who were excommunicated by the High Priest for having married without conforming to his instructions which to the parties concerned appeared dogmatic.

Yet another pioneer who laid the foundation stone for the organized Rationalist Movement was Mr. Gotwale who placed a room at Ranchod Bhavan at the disposal of the Association at a nominal rent. He printed many of the Association papers free of cost at his press.

Rationalist Association of India

Within less than a year after the formation of the Anti Priestcraft Association, at the General Body Meeting of the Association held on 13—2—1931, the name of the Association was changed to RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA. By this time the total membership jumped to 97 which had since reached 159 by 31—12—31.

During the year 1931 the Association continued its good work by starting a library with the books donated by Messrs. DRD Wadia, R. B. Cotwale, R. D. Dalal and Dr. D'Avoine. During this year Mr. P. Tricundas a member of the Executive Council attempted to stage his social reform play 'NYAYA' at the Royal Opera House but the same was frustrated by violence on the part of the orthodox section of the Pausal community. The year 1931 also

witnessed the commencement of the publication of the first ever Rationalist Journal in India. The journal 'Reason' was launched as a Quarterly in July 1931 but in response to the repeated requests from members, it was converted into a monthly from October 1931, with Dr. C. L. D. Avoine as Editor.

The infant Association had to face a real challenge from the Govt. towards the end of 1933. The Govt. took serious objection to an article entitled 'RELIGION AND MORALITY' published in September 73 issue of 'Reason' and issued an arrest warrant against its Editor Dr. C. L. D. Avoine. The Govt.'s conclusion was that some portions of the above article constituted an offence punishable under section 295 A of Indian Penal Code which reads as follows :

"Whoever, in the deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of His Majesty's subjects, by words either spoken or written, or by visible representation, insults or attempts to insult the religion or the religious feelings of that class shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years or fine or with both".

Those days, this case became very sensational and came to be known as "Reason Case" and helped the Indian Rationalist Movement to march ahead. After a prolonged legal battle the learned judge concluded his lengthy judgement thus :

"The article merely represents the writer's views on 'Religion and Morality'. I do not think that the article falls within section 295-A. I therefore acquit the accused". This case, till date continues to be one of the greatest victories for rationalists. But for the above favourable judgement, the Rationalist Movement which came into being in 1930 would have perished in 1934 itself.

Thereafter, the Rationalist Association marched on and on and with more and more

courage and support from various quarters. Prof. R. D. Karve took over the Editorship of Reason with Mr. Abraham Solomon as Asst. Editor. Under the able editorship of these two, the journal continued to improve month after month and year after year till the end of 1942.

Though the Association tried its best to continue to operate during the second world war, it could not survive the problems it had to face and gradually it became inactive and even defunct. During and immediately after the war the Members of the Rationalist Association of India were however functioning as the Indian Group of RPA (Rationalist Press Association, U. K.)

After the war was over and India gained independence, the Rationalists again revived their activities in 1949 with head quarters at Madras by changing the name for a second time to Indian Rationalist Association. As it is too cumbersome to change the name by complying with the legal formalities, the Association was founded as a new one and was registered afresh. The founder President of the revived Association Sir R. N. Paranjpye, Mr. S. Ramanathan, Mr. S. Ghosh, Mr. H. D. Rajah, Mr. Khasa Subba Rao, Mr. M.V.V.K. Rangachari, Mr. A. G. K. Murthy, Mr. Gora, Mr. M. K. Umar Koya etc. are some of those who revived the Indian Rationalist Association.

The ups and downs of IRA from 1949 till date are well known to many.

That is how the present Indian Rationalist Association is in a way 48 years old and is on the way to its Golden Jubilee. Plans are on hand to celebrate the Golden Jubilee on 2—3—1980 on a grand scale at Bombay and other parts of the country. The XI Convention of Indian Rationalists and a world Rationalists' Meet will be organised at Bombay as part of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations.

Hail Rationalist Movement! Hail I.R.A.!!



A. P. Renaissance Samiti Conference

The Foundation Conference of A. P. Renaissance Samiti was held on 25th March 78 at New Science College Hall at Hyderabad. Several persons, from mofussil and the cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad attended.

Dr. P Krishna Chowdary, Principal of Govt. Homeopathic College of Hyderabad, the Chairman of the Reception Committee while extending a warm welcome refuted the oft-repeated saying that East is Spiritualistic and the West is Materialistic. He said that the present generation is the proud inheritors of the thoughts of Charvaka, Buddha, and the philosophies of Kapila and Kanna. He paid glowing tributes to the memory of M. N. Roy who propounded that a philosophical revolution is the precondition for social revolution.

Prof. Ram Reddy, G., Vice-Chancellor of Osmania University who presided over the conference said that the country was in need of social movements. While there have been many significant social movements before Independence the country was now devoid of any such reformist activity.

Prof. C. Lakshmana, Principal of the University College of Arts and Commerce painted a grim picture of the caste system in Indian society. The manner in which the problem of caste was being tackled at present made him feel that the Indian society would continue to be caste-ridden for a long time to come.

Prof. Bh. Krishnamurthy, Head of Dept. of Linguistics of Osmania University made a strong case for making the Indian languages the media of Higher Education. If such a step had been taken immediately after Independence, the Indian languages would have achieved by now impressive progress as media of instruction.

The following are some of the resolutions passed at the conference:

1. On Secularism:

This conference is of the view that Secularism should govern the life of Indian Citizens.

This be understood as the principle that religion should be confined to the private life of a citizen and should not intrude on sphere of state activity and public policy. It regrets to note that the several Governments, past and present, at the Centre and State level have subscribed to the view that a Secular State is a Non-Communal state. Naturally this concept led to support of religions by the State in some measure which incidentally has been contributing to the emergence of a State wedded to the religion of the majority. Unless and until the prevailing concept is given up in favour of the principle of "separation of Religion and State" all attempts at reconciliation and harmonisation between the several religious communities and groups are bound to prove sterile and unfruitful. Hence this conference appeals to all intelligent and discerning people to re-examine the concept of secularism and hammer out the correct picture of secularism to shape the destiny of our country.

2. On Text Books:

This Conference views with concern the tendency and tenor of many text books in general and history text books in particular meant for study in schools and colleges being antithetical to the letter and spirit of secularism. Objectivity is conspicuous by its absence. The Indian people will not brook any interference, from any quarter whatsoever, to present a distorted and sectarian view of history. This conference appeals to the several authorities concerned with prescription of syllabi and publication of text books to steer clear of such an antiseccular trend.

3. Family Planning:

This conference is of the view that the importance and significance of Family Planning as an ameliorative measure should not be under estimated or minimised in the name of contributing to the Policy of Family Welfare. The large number of excesses and atrocities perpetrated in the avowed implementation of Family Planning by overzealous and over

enthusiastic persons should not blind us to the urgency of the programme of Family Planning. Hence it is but meet and proper that the authorities should engage themselves in proper and appropriate efforts at implementation of Family Planning by undertaking a huge and vast campaign to persuade the people.

tion that annihilation of principles of caste and barriers of class is vitally necessary for establishment of a society which can afford equal and just opportunities to all Indian citizens. This conference is not against reservations to Backward classes, Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes.

4. On class and castes:

This conference expresses its deep conviction



THE PIONEERS

The following were the first office bearers and Executive Council Members of the then Anti-Priest Craft Association elected for the year 1930-31 on 30-3-1930. The Association later came to be known as Rationalist Association of India.

<i>President</i>	: Dr. G. V. Deshmukh, M.D., F.R.C.S.
<i>Vice Presidents</i>	: A. S. Tyebji, Esq. Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, M. D.
<i>Treasurer</i>	: D. R. D. Wadia, Esq., BAR-AT-LAW
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Bible as a Guide

—by Dr. A. T. Kovoov

One Mr. D. J. Thamoatham rightly said, "The Bible is many things to many people. It is the mariner's compass, the pilgrim's staff, and the wayfarers' leading light. It should fill our memory, rule the heart and guide our feet."

That this so called Holy Book can be a guide to the immoral and the wicked as well can be proved by the following quotations:

"I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your wives when they commit adultery." (Hosea chapter 4, Verse 14).

Incest

"If any man thinketh that he becometh unseemly towards his virgin daughter, and if she be past the flower of her age, let him satisfy his need. He sinneth not. Let them marry." (1st Corinthians chapter 7 verse 36)

"He that giveth his daughter in marriage doeth well, but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better." (1st Corinthians chapter 7, verse 38)

God says that it is your "duty" to have sexual intercourse with the childless widow of your brother. (Deuteronomy chapter 21, verse 18-21)

God says that stubborn children should be stoned in public to death. (Deuteronomy chapter 21, verses 18-21)

"I will take thy wife before thine eyes and give her unto thy neighbour, and he will lie with her in thy presence and before the people of Israel." (2nd Samuel chapter 12, verse 11)

"And the Lord will lay their secret bare." (Isaiah chapter 3, verse 17)

Free Sex

"And meet thou among the captives a beautiful woman, and though hast a desire unto her, you should bring her home and go in unto her and be her husband. You should take her to thee as wife, and if thou hast no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will. (Deuteronomy chapter 21, verses 11-14)

God's Share

"Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. Save all the virgins and keep them alive for yourselves.....They brought 32,000 virgins and gave 32 of them to God as his tribute." (Numbers Chapter 31, verses 17, 35, 40).

Jesus said, "I came not to send peace, but sword. I came to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter in-law against her mother-in-law." (Mathew chapter 10, Verse 35).

Discord

Jesus told his disciples, "Sell your garments, and buy swords." (Luke chapter 22, verse 35)

Robbing under the pretext of borrowing is encouraged. (Exodus chapter 12 verses 35 and 36)

★

Dr. Kovoov Elected to the Board

Dr. Abraham Kovoov, President of the Sri Lanka Rationalist Association is elected to the board of trustees of the International Tribal Life Fund established to prevent destruction of primitive people in different parts of the world by UNESCO and the Ecology Department of the Common Market.

Some of the other members of the board are: King Leopold III, Dr. Christian Barnard, Margaret Mead, Marlon Brando and Sir Edward Evans Pritchard. The organisation has its head quarters at Brussels.

Woman - The Predestined

by Ms. Margaret Bhatt

One of the greatest national wastes in this country is higher education for women. Three-quarters of them are in colleges to obtain precious pieces of paper which will guarantee them good offers of marriage. And having married, few make any return on the state's investment in their education by working or contributing to society outside their homes.

To what extent are Indian women responsible for their own subjugation? How many so-called educated girls from the middle class gain a new perspective on themselves even while studying for those pieces of paper? Despite their education, they still cling to fossilized traditions which at best perpetuate their own enslavement. They are unwilling to break free of those conventions which prevent them from functioning as complete individuals. They never take a stand on the side of enlightened rationalism. They remain uneducated.

Christmas Present

Most Americans have probably forgotten all about Christmas by now. Most, but not all. An Illinois telephone Company recently sent out bills for calls made under its "Diala-Santa" programme, which drew more than 250,000 calls daily for its 31-day run—mostly by children and mostly, it turns out, without the knowledge of their parents. The family of one unemployed man was billed 15 and said they had no money to pay for the calls. "The phone company wanted to make a profit and they did," said the mother of the family, commenting on the "Christmas present" the company gave itself!

Who is responsible?

The slavish manner in which Indian mothers dote on their sons is an insult to their own sex. Are daughters any less deserving because of their gender? The insistence of Indian mothers on exorbitant dowries has successfully devalued women themselves. The proverbial tyranny of the Indian mother-in-law is one of the most disgraceful aspects of Indian family life today. If widows suffer ostracism and misery within families, who is responsible for this but the women of the household themselves?

One is not born a woman, wrote Simone de Beauvoir—but one *becomes* woman, meaning that the civilising process and a whole set of predetermined values within our cultures slowly bend us to their will and fashion us towards our ultimate destiny as women—marriage.

This destiny moves women along a predictable path—from patriarchal dominance in the home, to the dominance of their husbands. Masculine supremacy is a very real thing in Indian society, no matter what influence women might claim to wield from the inner courtyards. This supremacy is reinforced by rigid social conventions, and religious beliefs which are rooted in pure fantasy identified as God and Divine Will. There is no argument against either.

Marriage is Compulsory

Women are female humans who are conditioned to think, act, and live the way their culture dictates. Certainly the same kind of conditioning fashions men, too, but it does not imprison them within their sex. A man is not born to become a father, or even to marry if he prefers to remain single. But a woman is born to marry and destined for motherhood whether or not her temperament and intellect accepts it. If she proves barren, her infertility is a stigma. If she is physically defective, or places too intolerable a burden of dowry on her parents, she is accursed and inauspicious.

If she tried to prove her individuality and refuses to submit to the sexual tyranny of marriage she is denied respect, and regarded as a woman degenerate and without virtue. Of course, she might turn pious—there is great dignity allowed her in piety. Otherwise as a spinster she is likely to end up the sad subject of sexist jokes.

For a man marriage is a matter of choice because he is economically independent. For a woman marriage is a refuge because she is denied the kind of education that will enable her to work. Besides, her predestined purpose in life is procreation and therefore to keep her from bastardising a man's blood line by straying, her chastity must be secured. This is achieved by severely restricting her freedom and ensuring that she is utterly subservient through religious myths.

"As the shadow to the substance, so to her Lord is faithful wife," says Sita to Rama. To most Indian women this would appear as a right and proper statement of what constitutes wifely duty. It is, in fact, an indictment.

This sense of fatalism is instilled in women from childhood. Their entire upbringing tends towards a predetermined end. A little girl is early made aware of how clothes, jewellery and ornaments enhance physical attractiveness. Adults comment on her physical assets, her hair, eyes and complexion within her hearing.

Physical appearance

"I'm so black, who will want to marry me?"

The remark seemed laughable because the speaker was a girl of six with whom I found myself sharing a park bench. She sighed heavily and appeared unhappy which was hardly surprising because I found that her pet name was Kali, and her family teased her that she was not one of them because she was so dark, but a changeling from a low-caste family. It is likely that she will go through life burdened by a sense of inadequacy for failing to measure up to an impossible standard of physical beauty set for girls. This kind of inadequacy obliges women to manipulate people instead through tears, tantrums and self-pity.

Middle-class girls in my neighbourhood have pet names which suggest daintiness, smallness—and helplessness: Baby, Chhoti, Dinkly, Tinku etc. Some are called Guddi—or other names denoting the word "doll". Girls are always given tea sets, cooking pots and items of domestic ware for toys. A boy who shows interest in such things is discouraged as if it were a shame to his sex. But for a girl it is all right—She identifies with them. Her dolls are like herself, passive creatures. They can be prettied up, fussed and beautified—and then admired. They are her children, too, and foreshadow her ultimate sexual destiny.



'Pariksha' for Valmiki's "Agni Pariksha"

SAGAR: Apr. 5: Twelve trainee nurses of the Nurses and Midwife Training Centre here inflicted themselves with serious burn injuries by putting their hands in boiling water to prove themselves not guilty of the theft of a gold ring of the Sister-tutor last week-end.

According to the police, the Sister-tutor compelled all the suspects to put their hands in boiling water while a sadhu recited mantras. The sadhu had told the nurses that only the culprits would receive burn injuries.

One of the aggrieved nurses yesterday told about the torture to her mother who reported the matter to the police. After medical examination of the injured, the police registered a case against both the sadhu and the Sister-tutor who has since been suspended—Samachar.

(Courtesy : Times of India)

Reared on myths

As she grows she identifies with her mother and the women of the household. She learns her myths at their knees and the tales and legends on which her imagination feeds all exemplify the masterful superiority of the male and the submissive dutiful inferiority of the female. This distinction extends to the games she plays. It turns up in the dubious films she sees where heroines are really victims—women whose honour is tried and virtue tested by fire, before they are even granted a right to happiness. The subjects she takes in school confirm this sexual inferiority and no matter how earnest a pupil she might prove initially, in later adolescence she becomes aware that she is really only marking time—waiting for marriage.

At the end of this entire process what is she? An artificial creature created from the myths on which she has been reared. She thinks piety in women indicates strength of character, and sees herself as pure and virtuous because she is sexually ignorant. Respectability to her means passivity and an unquestioning acceptance of the odium attached to her person as a woman. She is convinced that her inferiority is a biological and scientific reality, that her sex stunts her emotionally and mars her intellectually. These, briefly, are the concepts that have determined her total identity. She is content because her education has taught her no better.

Pasers for women

Any woman who has the intelligence to understand this article needs to stop and take a look at herself and ask some of these questions: Am I a person or a product of a rigid social and religious conditioning? How much of my life has been decided for me by others? Am I in control of it even now? How many of my choices are still being made for me by others—my husband, or the men in my household? Am I perpetuating through my daughters the same fossilized

myths on which women of my community have been reared for centuries? Do I really see myself as biologically inferior, intellectually marred, and basically stupid simply because of my gender? Is it fair that I should convince my daughters of these fallacies, too, and deny them the right to self-realisation when they become adults?

There is immense potential for change placed within the grasp of every educated woman who becomes mother of a family, or finds herself within reach of young minds. For she it is who transmits attitudes and values through sons and daughters alike. She it is who animates the dwelling, as one author has put it, where the past is present and the future already pre-figured. She it is who brings forth the next generation and nurtures it towards maturity, understanding and enlightenment. So whatever her own limited destiny might be today, she has it within her power to pass on the gift of freedom and self-reliance to the women of tomorrow.



Circumcision Of Women

The following anonymous letter was featured in a recent number of FEMINA magazine. Our readers are welcome to comment on this:

"We, the writers of this letter, are mothers who are being pressurised to subject our daughters to circumcision. For amongst the Dawoodi Bohras, a girl of seven or eight is subjected to a circumcision which involves the cutting off of her clitoris. This is usually done in secrecy and under unhygienic conditions. This barbaric custom, supposedly prevalent only amongst primitive African tribes, is being practised by educated Bohras in India and other parts of the world".

Ms. M. R. Bhatty

How Ignorant Are They

—Prem K. Sahil

Ram Lila:

All know that the festival of DIVALI is based on the wellknown Indian epic 'Ramayana' one of the so-called holy books of the Hindus. The person who has gone through this epic with a rational approach can say unscrupulously that the book is a paradoxically of fabulous facts. In no way can he or she overlook the blunders cited therein. Their successors rather added more to that when openly they started making a spurious display of those blunders. They started celebrating Ramlila, a sheer celebration of blunders their predecessors once had committed, behind the blind curtain of the so-called deference they showed towards their 'great holi' predecessors baptized as gods. Every year a large amount of money is burnt in the form of fireworks and no less is spent on such other unnecessary performances.

'Arti' Performance by the Sikhs:

Arti is performed particularly at 'bhog' ceremony by the Sikhs. But in a way Guru Nanak once had repudiated the same in a verse named ARTI composed by him. In the verse the Guru-poet had splendidly cited that an 'arti' in itself is always going on. There is neither repose nor halt in the continuous flow of Nature.

Idol Worship :

Guru Nanak utterly refuted idol worship. But very sadly one is bound to say that the same is being committed even after the hostile proclamation the Guru once voiced.

For the first time I saw the celebration of the 'Ganapati' festival in Bombay by a large majority of Maharashtrians. I felt a deadly shock when I found that the god they worshipped was being bought and sold on footpaths-and again astonished I was seeing that

after a few days' worship, they threw their god Ganesh of various sizes into the sea. Some of them being unable to reach upto sea, threw their 'holy' god into a nearby dirty-smelling pond. What did people get out of that, I could not imagine. Merely idols charges hands in the form of buying and selling. And at the same time the execution of the god himself was perpetrated by his own blind worshippers. This was all a business-oriented activity; merely destruction of money, material time and labour; a sheer human folly. Had the same amount of money, material, time and labour been employed in some genuine construction, a remarkable attractive achievement would have resulted.

Holy Bath:

People perform pilgrimages to so-called holy places and there they take their so-called holy bath in 'holy' ponds with which they believe all their diseases are cured. Not only this but also they drink the same water willingly rather covetingly. Moreover, they bring the water along to their homes where they distribute the same among their near and dear and the rest they keep blocked in bottles for years. But these poor blind faithfals under the utter darkness of ignorance are unable to see the dreadful diseases they become victims of. Besides where mainly ailing personnel take bath that water can remain no longer holy. If despite this they call such water 'holy'—then a person having a logical approach is impelled to declare that by the word 'holy' these ignorant people mean dirt and disease.

A large number of other such examples can be cited to show that religion since its origin has constructed nothing, rather destroyed a lot. The product of hunger, fear, disease and a few vested-interests, religion is a cunning fraud based on God—who is a mere myth-an outcome of ignorance. ★

A Maoris Home Truth For U. K. Racists

A telling reply to U. K. Opposition Leader, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher's concern over the "danger" of Britain losing its cultural values in a tidal wave of coloured immigrants has come from distant New Zealand.

REPATRIATE WHITES !

A member of the native Maori community Ngata Te Korou, who is a teacher, wrote to the Sunday Times: "Perhaps it would comfort the British to know that we Maoris have managed to keep our language and some of our traditions alive in spite of being overwhelmed ten to one by British immigrants over the last 150 years — and that in spite of a determined attack upon our culture by the immigrant majority, which lasted for over a century."

Referring to proposals for repatriation of immigrants from Asia and the Caribbean, Mr. Te Korou commented, "should any future Conservative, Powellite or National Front Government succeed in repatriating immigrants, we will hope to return your emigrants to take up the vacancies. It so happens that we have almost exactly the same number of 'cultural aliens' as Britain has 'coloured immigrants' about 2.5 million whites of predominantly British extraction. There seems to be no reason why the indigenous populations of other old Common Wealth countries should not expect likewise".

ALL WHITE U.K.

The letter added, "This would mean that for every West Indian or Indian deported, we could send you, on a fair statistical basis, as replacements, one 'Pakeha' New Zealander, four Australians, four Canadians, half a South African white, part of a white Rhodesian and no fewer than 50 American wasps.

"It would take some time for you to absorb the extra two million people involved, but there is no reason why if phased over a decent period (say a century) and with sensible birth control measures being taken, England should not be the exclusive home of those who speak English and live in English manner".

Courtesy—"Sunday Times"

RAMAYANA CREMATED

Two 'caste' Hindu students were arrested in Banares 'Hindu' University for burning a copy of the Ramayana in front of the Sanskrit University

According to a Senior Police Superintendent, the arrests were made on the charge of inciting 'caste' and 'religious' hatred. Two more students were involved in the incident.

It is stated that a group of Banares 'Hindu' University students reported to the police that a section of the Arjak Sangh had burnt the 'holy' book at the gate of the University. A little later another group of students lodged another complaint that the book was burnt not by the Arjak Sangh but by the complainants themselves. The SSP said "on verification it was found that only the caste Hindu students had done it to incite religious and caste hatred".

STIGMATA

[We give below excerpts from the book
"Psychosomatic structure of miracles"
by Mr. P. K. Narayanan, a Vice
President of IRA—Ed.]

Stigmatics is the term used to refer to individuals on whose person appear the so-called "holy wounds of crucified Christ." Generally the wounds would be five in number, one each on the palms of the hands and the legs and one on the chest. The wounds are called stigmata. Stigmata are a very rare occurrence and are deemed to be a great miracle. They are supposed to represent the wounds sustained by Jesus Christ at the time of Crucifixion.

Every phenomenon attributed to miracle can find its objective explanation through the foregoing studies. However, this small book would remain incomplete in the absence of some specific analysis about the appearance of stigmata which is regarded to be a baffling mystery and a stupendous miracle by religious men all over the world.

Christian literature has made very reverential references on divine men who had stigmata, the holy wounds of crucifix.

French religious fanatic Louise Lateau and another Italian Priest Padre Peo (who died on 17—9—1968) were stigmatics, with the so-called holy wounds.

What are Stigmata?

Stigmata are "spontaneous" local bleeding ulcerations. They are symptoms appearing on certain persons suffering from hysterical neuroses. In religious cults, these local subcutaneous bruises develop on persons of highly susceptible religious fervour during ecstatic states. To illustrate this aspect, the life history of Padre Peo will be of immense help.

Padre Peo's parents were highly religious people. Their great ambition was to send young Padre to monastery and to equip him for priesthood. They planned everything conducive for the boy for a religious and priestly upbringing. He was not allowed to play with neighbourhood boys. Prayer and study of religious literature were his only pastime.

A grown-up Padre Peo was not different, he became a priest and spent all his time in prayer. He knelt before the crucifix and prayed and prayed for hours together. He cut short his food and sleep. Christ and the great sacrifice were his only thought process. He spent long sixteen years in this way (i. e. A. D 1902 to 1918).

On one fine morning in 1918, Padre Peo was in his prayer room. Tired and exhausted, suddenly his sleepish eyes twinkled for he observed the fruitions of his great ambition, nay ambition of a generation! Blood was dripping from his palms, from the cross-like wounds. To his delight he observed ulcers in the palm of his legs and also one on his chest. It was an unforgettable moment for him, the

INDIA 1977

Unehava village in Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh—a former 'Harijan' bonded labourer, Amizudha, was shot dead. The reason for the killing was that he refused to return to his former master to do bonded labour—'Patriot', September 15, 1977.

Kandadia village in Ratlam District of Madhya Pradesh: Four "Harijans" were killed and several injured when the landlords and their armed goondas attacked the Harijans who were working on their lands. These Harijans were previously landless. Last year they were allotted some surplus land taken over by the Government under the Land Ceiling Act.

—Courtesy "Pont of view"

moment of the great miracle which proclaimed his unchallenging stature as divine Saint !

Scientific Explanation

What then is the scientific explanation for the appearance of bleeding wounds in the body of stigmatics ? They appear without any external causes as we have seen in the case of Padre Peo.

Answer to this question can be found in the experiments conducted in the summer of 1927 in Soviet Russia by V. Finne and others in the presence of Professor M. Chennorutsky and Professor K. Povarnin. The relevant portion of the experiment as explained in page '97 of the book, "The word as a Physiological and Therapeutic Factor" is quoted below :

"Subject M. 35 years old, easily suggestible, was put up by V. Finne into a state of suggested sleep after which a copper coin was applied to the inner side of her left forearm with the suggestion that it was a burning-hot metal disc: as a result the subject sustained a heavy burn and felt an acute pain.

"After awakening she was continuously watched by one of the physicians, a member of the conference. According to the record of the observations, 25 minutes after the aforesaid suggestion and awakening from suggested sleep the skin was red at the point of the "burn"; 55 minutes later, a swelling was observed; 2½ hours later, a white spot appeared in the centre of the "burned" spot and 3½ hours later a blister was formed."

Yes, under deep hypnosis a suggestion to the effect of "burning" makes a Second Degree on that spot on the body of the subject where the hypnotist or the operator wanted the burn to occur. This is the result of the extraordinary reactions of the paradoxical phase.

In religious ecstatic states the same phenomenon takes place. It should be clearly understood that appearance of stigmata is not a common feature. It occurs in very rare cases

of rigorous religious practices arising out of acute, dedicated religious fervour. It is nothing short of self sacrifice.

During the long spells of prayerful dedicated sessions, the subject that is the believer becomes completely exhausted, the exhaustion taking place as a consequence of excessive excitation of nerve cells due to strained body postures, concentration of sensory centre set all. The believer-subject thus enters into deep hypnotic states. His delusional beliefs of "holy wounds" which have strong rooted impressions of images in his memory cells, turn out to be strong suggestions and he develops blisters and wounds in the palms and chest just like the "Second degree" burn explained in V. Finne's experiment.

There is, however, a marked difference in the appearance of religious ecstatic stigmata and second degree burn in the experiment referred to. That is the difference of heterohypnosis and autohypnosis. In most cases of religious ecstatic experiences, the believer passes into the state of hypnosis by himself by the process of auto-suggestion and the experiences that follow are the results of self-suggestions arising out of delusional beliefs.

The phenomenon of stigmata appears in religious fanatics as a result of peculiar cerebral functions corresponding to hysterical neuroses. But this need not be the case always. As in the case of any other religious hoaxes there are manipulators among stigmatics also. The writer knows a nun in Kerala who out of her anxiety and craving for popularity and money used to bore wounds in her palms with used up razor blades ! The artificial "holy wounds" brought her enough of publicity, fame and money, although what she did was really an unholy act.

[The book priced Rs. 5 is available for sale at IRA—Ed.]



NEWS AND NOTES

RATIONALIST MEETING AT BARODA

At a meeting of Baroda Rationalists presided over by Ms. Vatsala Mehta, Mr. Kamalashankar Pandya, President of Indian Rationalist Association dealt on the increase in blind faith, superstitions and godmanship by the elite, intellectuals and the poor sections of the society. Mr. Pandya opined that the affluent sections must have a God-man to protect their misdeeds and the Rationalists therefore should work among the downtrodden by opening pre-primary and primary schools in their areas and slowly and steadily bringing them round to the Rationalist viewpoint.

Ms. Vatsala Mehta who is one of the pioneers of the Rationalist movement of Gujarat gave a detailed account of the difficulties experienced by the early reformers and how she also had to suffer terribly and some times get isolated due to her Rationalist thinking. Mr. J. J. Mehta, former Chairman of the Indian petrochemicals, also spoke. Ms. Vatsala Mehta was appointed a co-editor of the Gujarati Rationalist magazine and Mr. Sadanandam as the Convener of the newly formed Baroda Unit. Next month a Gujarat Convention of the Rationalists will be held.

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WALSTON CHUBB DEAD

Walston Chubb died on October 13, 1977 at the age of 83 in St. Louis. His sister, Mavis Gallie, a member of the New York Society for Ethical Culture resides at Grammercy Park, New York, N. Y. 10003. He was the son of Percival Chubb.

Percival Chubb was one of the Ethical Movement's most distinguished leaders. At a young man he had founded, with G. Bernard Shaw, Havelock Ellis and others, the Society for the Higher Life, forerunner of both the Ethical Union (British) and the Fabian Society. After apprenticeship under Adler and teaching in New York Ethical Culture School, he served as editor of *The Ethical Record*, from 1900; St. Louis Society leader, 1911-1932; leader emeritus, 1932-1960; A. E. U. President; 1934-1940. His books included, *On the Religious Frontier*, *From an Outpost of Ethical Religion* (1931), *Festivals and Plays in Schools and Elsewhere* (1912).

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DONATION FROM Mrs. SHAKUNTALA PARANJPYE

We gratefully acknowledge the receipt of handsome donation of Rs. 500 in the form of books from Mrs. Shakuntala Paranjpye. Mrs. Paranjpye is the daughter of Sir R. N. Paranjpye of IRA. After the death of Sir Paranjpye, his family loss contacts with IRA and she her now revived her contacts by not only becoming a life member of IRA but also donating a large number of copies of his books. The book titled "Sense and Nonsense" is available for sale at Rs. 10/- per copy.

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ROURKELA RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION

The 7th Annual General Body Meeting of Rourkela Rationalist Association was held

on 4-4-78. The following office bearers were elected for the year 1978-79:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1. President | Mr. Gokulan |
| 2. Secretary | Mr. P. K. Divakaran |
| 3. Treasurer | Mr. K. P. V. Panicker |
| 4. Librarian | Mr. T. R. Vijayan |

Working Committee Members

1. Mr. A. Vasu
2. Mr. M. C. S. Pillai
3. Mr. T. P. N. Pillai
4. Mr. C. Padmanabhan

Auditor: Mr. C. G. S. Pillai

It has been decided to invite eminent rationalists to Rourkela during the year to participate in a debate to promote rationalist ideas.

* * * *

DEVOTEES PAY THE PRICE

A couple from Bangalore were allegedly waylaid and robbed off their jewelry worth over Rs. 13,000 on Wednesday night on the Tirumala footpath by four miscreants.

The miscreants, who were following the couple from down the hill, stabbed Mr. S. R. Madan in the chest causing heavy bleeding and stuffed cloth into his mouth. They tied up the hands and legs of the couple who were then dumped on a bush. The culprits decamped with the booty.

When the victims later managed to raise an alarm some pilgrims came to their help and took them to Thirumala. Mr. Madan was admitted in a hospital from where he was discharged on Friday.

* * * *

RICHARD O' HAIR IS DEAD

Richard Franklin O' Hair, husband of American Atheist leader Madalyn Murray O' Hair, died on 13th March, 1978 in the Veterans' Administration Hospital, in Temple, Texas, of Carcinoma.

Richard O' Hair joined the communist party of the United States in 1945 on behalf of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and spent the next twenty years of his life as a spy against domestic subversive groups. His most open role was to give testimony concerning the infiltration by the Communist Party of the United States in the automotive industry at public hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee in Detroit, Michigan, circa February-March 1952.

When he was called in to the American Embassy in Mexico City, Mexico and ordered to assassinate a chief of state circa summer of 1963, he terminated his association with the security divisions of government. In 1965 he met Madalyn Murray in Mexico, joining her later in Austin, Texas in October, 1965; when they were married.

He is survived by his mother, his sister, his 2 sons, an adopted daughter, and 2 step sons, as well as his wife, Madalyn Murray O' Hair.

He was, from 1965 to 1975 the president of the Society of Separationists, Inc., the American Atheist organisation which strives for separation of state and church. He also headed the mock counter-religious "poor Richards's American Atheist Church." He died as an Atheist with full knowledge that all persons must terminate.

* * * *

FREETHOUGHT

RATIONALISM ENTERS NORWAY

Thanks to the efforts of some Dutch humanists who understand Norwegian we are now better informed about Det Norske Hedningsamfunn, an organisation that got in touch with IHEU. Its members who call themselves "Heathen" are active in trying to shake the position of power held by the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Their slogan is: No Redeemer—Personal Responsibility. In Norway there is no civil registration of births, deaths and marriages: the church keeps registers of everything. It is even impossible to get a job without one's school certificate being signed by a Lutheran pastor.

Since 1976 students and other young people have been distributing leaflets, making speeches and initiating discussions in parks and in the streets, particularly in and around Oslo. They also invite christians to debating sessions, which often resulted in the latter concluding that they should pray twice as hard as before for those heathen. One of Hedningsamfunn's arguments is that church interference in private matters goes contrary to the Declaration of Human Rights. The church is compared to an old house that must be pulled down without delay: the Norwegian people should abandon Evangelical Lutheran traditions and choose humanist ideas.

—Nettie Killin, I.H.E.U

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BARODA UNIT OF I.R.A.

At a [meeting of Rationalists of Baroda presided by Shri Kamalashanker Pandya, Baroda Unit of the I.R.A. was formed with Mrs. Vatsala Mehta, C. Sadanandan and

Shri Sanat O. Mehta as conveners. The meeting congratulated the people of Gujarat who raised their mighty voice against the wasteful expenditure on Saket Yagna of Jai Gurudev Baba and Gayatri Yagna. The meeting also paid handsome tributes to the valour shown by the heroes of the campaign who came out boldly in processions, streets corner meetings and mock dramas. The meeting also noted that while Janatha, Congress and Congress (I) dignitaries visited these yagnas the Prime Minister decried the madness of these yagnas and refused to attend the yagna. In desperation the Gurudev cursed the Prime Minister and vowed to bring down the Janata Government.

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RAJKOT UNIT FORMED:

Rajkot unit has been formed with Shri Yasin Dalai, a member of the Working Committee of the G.R.A. and Shri Mansukh Joshi, Ex-Minister of Gujarat State as conveners.

In view of the impending Conference of the IRA at Palghat the Gujarat conference has been postponed to June which will be inaugurated by Dr. H. Narasimhalah, former Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore University.

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RATIONALIST DHARNA BEFORE RADIO STATIONS IN KERALA

Kerala Rationalist Association had launched "Dharna" before all the four All India Radio Statsons in Kerala on 4-3-78 to protest against the religious

MAY, 1978.

propaganda through radio. Volunteers of the rationalist organisations proceeded to the stations in procession raising placards :

Alleppy

Mr. P. Ravindran, Secretary Alleppy District Rationalist Association and John Edamarukku led the procession at Alleppy. The dharna continued for two hours. They submitted to the memorandum to the Station Director.

Copies of the memorandum were also sent to the Minister for Information and to the Director of Programmes of A.I.R. New Delhi.

The slogans raised through the dharna got wide publicity and thereby KRA could attract the common masses towards our programme. An All India Campaign should follow this effort to widen the effectiveness of our aims and to fulfill the slogans. KRA likes to propose that Indian Rationalist Association should take up this task as one of its future activities.

Calicut

155 rationalist volunteers marched with placards in procession towards the AIR Station at the beach under the leadership of Narayanan Periya, U. Kalanathan, Gangan Azhikada, T. P. R. Pillai and P. C. Kesavan. Mr. Thiruvath Raman, Editor of Pradapan daily inaugurated the Dharna. The memorandum was submitted to Sri Konnilyoor R. Narendranath, Director of Kozhikode Radio Station.

Trivandrum

Volunteers of Rationalist Association from Quilon and Trivandrum Districts marched towards the Trivandrum Radio Station under the leadership of Dr. P. V. Velayudhan Pillai, President of RRA Prof. Thomas Varghese, Iranimutton Suren dran and Dr Babu Joseph. The Dharna continued for two hours during which the representatives submitted the memorandum to the Station Director.

Trichur

More than 130 volunteers of Rationalist Association started in a procession from Pallimukku Junction under the leadership of R. Krishnankutty Nair, A. V. Jose, V. Chitharanjan and Jose Carimpana, M. R. Subramaniam. President of Palghat District Committee inaugurated the Dharna. The memorandum was submitted to the Station Director.

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RADICAL HUMANISTS' CONFERENCE.

The following is the resolution unanimously passed at the Radical Humanist Conference held in New Delhi on April 1st, under the Presidency of Mr. M. V. Ramamurthy. The resolution was moved by Mr. Premnath Bazaz a noted writer.

FREETHOUGHT

On necessity of a Rationalist movement

Colossal ignorance of its people is the bane of Indian society: it keeps them backward-looking in all fields of human activity and makes them helpless in coping with the various problems confronting them. What is worse, it has deprived them of self-confidence, the distinguishing merit of human beings, and compels them to seek spiritual crutches to eke out existence in the world.

In the post-independence period greater emphasis than before came to be laid on the superiority and sublimity of the ancient religious culture. There has been a mushroom growth of godmen in the shape of babas, bhagwans, yogis, mahatmas, devis, rishis, astrologers and others who claim to perform miracles in order to exploit popular ignorance to their advantage. Gullible crowds which include, besides illiterate masses, the so-called intelligentsia and even some scientists, are easily taken in and deluded. The godmen have thus become a new and powerful force in perpetuating the spiritual backwardness of benighted Indians; they are thwarting the mental revolution which is sine quo non for liberation and progress of the country. It is a potential danger which has to be squarely met and valiantly fought until it is crushed.

This conference of the Radical Humanists therefore calls upon its members to expose the real character of godmen movement, awaken people by dissemination of knowledge, and make them conscious of the spiritual slavery which is tightening its hold on them. Radicals should make all possible efforts to raise the fallen Indian spirit and restore self-confidence in the people so that they will no longer require the spiritual crutches to live full, free, happy and contented lives.

For the accomplishment of this historical task, Radical Humanists will need co-operation and helping hand of freedom-loving elements outside their own ranks of which perhaps there is no dearth in the country. This conference appeals to rationalists of all hues to come forward at this grave juncture in the freedom struggle and unitedly face the growing menace of anti-people godmen movement for the emancipation of India's captive self. The more the people come into their own, the greater will be the speed with which the cult of godmen will fade away.

* * * *

RATIONALIST BECOMES CHIEF JUSTICE



Rationalists all over India will be glad to learn that Mr. Justice Avula Sambasiva Rao, a judge of the A. P. High Court was elevated as the Chief Justice of the same Court on 9-4-78. Mr. Rao is a very active Rationalist and Humanist till he was appointed as Judge of the A. P. High Court. He was secretary of IRA from 1965 to 1967 and its Vice-President, from 1967 to 1971. He was the Chairman of the Reception Committee for the VII Convention of Indian Rationalists held at Hyderabad in February 1965.

Science, Society and Scientific Attitude

Bangalore University, Rs 5/-

(Available for sale with I. R. A.)

This is a textbook prescribed for the degree course and it brings together seventeen essays and lectures by men eminent in their own fields. Science is discussed vis-a-vis Education, Planning, Technology, Agriculture Society and Social Change, Peace, Politics, Population Control, Philosophy, Literature and Health. But the ones of particular interest to readers would be those concerning the Scientific Temper, Superstition and Religion.

Atheists see no distinction between religion and superstition—the latter merely being a more benighted extension of the former. Therefore, some of the essays written by scientists who argue on behalf of rationalism and at the same time speak of a need for religion will appear to them as intellectual ambivalence.

SUPERSTITIOUS SCIENTIST

Regrettably, it is where the religious side outweighs the rational in scientists that knowledge has received a set-back. Writing on "Science and Superstition" Prof. Y. Nayudamma, Director General C.S.I.R., New Delhi, says of Indian scientists:

"The majority are ambivalent—a scientist in the laboratory, a superstitious addict at home. The medical doctors wear amulets: the scientists break coconuts to bribe the gods to succeed in their efforts. In the sea of tradition-bound society, steeped in superstition, science gets encapsulated without much interaction, and progress is blocked."

There is no verity in religion. It happens by accident of birth, and irrational emotional appeal sustains it. Therefore what is proclaimed as the ultimate truth by one creed is dismissed as superstition by a conflicting dogma.

SCIENTIFIC TRUTHFULNESS.

Russell, writing in *A History of Western Philosophy* said: "In the welter of conflicting fanaticisms, one of the few unifying forces is scientific truthfulness, by which I mean the habit of basing our beliefs upon observations and inference as impersonal and as much divested of local and temperamental bias as is possible for human beings."

However, in his essay on "Science and Pollution of our spiritual Lives" Dr. Raja Ramanna, Director of BARC, Bombay, says that science has its limitations, and because of these limitations "we have to attribute much of our creative activity to the spirit, or our consciousness within us. Having chosen this path of evolution and knowing that there is established consciousness, it is clear that there is need for ethics and a code of behaviour for collective living. This I believe, is the primary need for any organised religion."

Now, no rationalist with a belief in humanism will deny the need for such an ethic, but it does not necessarily occur only within religion. In fact, experience proves that religion has often worked against humanistic principles which ought to transcend all creed and culture to arrive at a shared and common sense of humanity.

There is a resurgence of religious superstition with a flourishing international market being exploited by godmen and gurus. At home there is the more sinister spectacle of the subversion of intellectual freedom—as was evident in the way obscurantist elements forced the resignation of Dr. H. Narasimhaiah because he opposed Sai Baba.

It is time intellectuals and scientists and men of good conscience spoke out. "It is imperative that our people turn away from the cheap and secret miracles of yoga and religion", writes Swami Ranganathananda,

President, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Secunderabad, in his essay on "Science and Religion", and describes as "infantile all religious magic and miracles."

MATERIALISATION OF OBJECTS.

Speaking out against the materialisation of bhasmum, watches, etc. as scientifically impossible and clearly a hoax, Dr. Raja Ramanna says: "The simplest alternative explanation would be that this is a demonstration of a sleight of hand, or a well contrived magic performance as ably shown by my friend Dr. Kovoor, who is also able to demonstrate many of these, but requires no divine inspiration."

These are welcome statements and clear appeals to reason—but they are not enough. Nowhere does one read of a concerted effort on the part of Indian Scientists to oppose and expose fraud through their knowledge of natural law and science. Nor does one read of prestigious and "enlightened" missions like that headed by the Swami organising countrywide campaigns to bring the real truth to the people.

In fact the Swami quotes Vivekananda on the catastrophe awaiting mankind if deprived of religion. "Take religion away from human society, and what will remain? Nothing but a forest of brutes."

Ironically, it is just these kind of people—godless and without religion, who have been active where others who see themselves as better-qualified are silent—godless people like Dr. Abraham Kovoor, and members of the Indian Rationalist Association who have organised campaigns against godmen and miracleworkers because they earnestly wish to see the clear light of reason illuminate this country, along with a scientific temper inspired by the principles of humanism.

—Ms. M. R. Bhatta

Book Review-II

Re-Thinking on evolution

ORIGINS. BY Richard Leakey and Roger Lewin, Dutton 17 95 Illustrated.

Richard Leakey writes that "On hearing, one June afternoon in 1860 the suggestion that mankind was descended from the apes, the wife of the Bishop of Worcester is said to have exclaimed, "My dear, descended from apes! let us hope it is not true, but if it is, let us pray that it will not become generally known".

CO-OPERATION AND NOT CONFLICT

His conclusions are for the most part intriguing and certainly controversial. "Origins" disputes the popular thesis that human conflict has always existed or that aggression is an expected function of our genes. Leakey and Lewin argue convincingly that the key to the transformation of the hominid into a human being was not its aggressive, survival-of-the-fittest nature but an ability to share in a complex social context.

This quality of co-operation, they wrote, "probably the single most important factor in the emergence of mankind.... more than any other piece of social behaviour, the motivation to co-operate in group effort is a direct legacy of the nature of human evolution".

—Mr. Peter S. Greenberg

Test for Reason No.8

A. Suryanarayana

A large Commercial Organisation wanted to recruit three hands—one in a slightly senior position and two in a Junior grade. The selection committee selected three persons AB and C and it was left to the General manager to select the best among them for the senior position.

The General Manager called all the three of them and explained the company's terms. He told them they would all initially get Rs. 10,000 p.a.—payable half yearly. He added that there are two scales of increment—either Rs. 1500—every year or Rs. 500 every half year and the employees are free to choose any of them

Almost instantaneously A and B preferred Rs. 1500 p.a. After a pause, Mr. C. opted for Rs. 500 per half year.

The General Manager then issued the Appointment Orders to all the three of them—posting A and B in the lower grade and C in the higher position.

What is the logic of the General Manager? Was he pleased with 'C's' humility and good intention of saving money for his company?

RULES :

1. The entries should be received on or before 25th May 1978.

2. There is a prize of Rs. 10 in the form of books to be sent to the winner. If there are more than one correct entry, the prize will be decided on lots.

3. Readers are requested to quote their Membership or Subscription number.

—:O:—

Solution for Test for Reason No 7

The members of the family can get out of the building in the following manner:—

1. Daughter comes down
2. Son comes down and daughter goes up.
3. Mother comes down and son goes up.
4. Daughter comes down
5. Son comes down and daughter goes up.
6. Daughter comes down
7. Father comes down and mother, son and daughter go up.
8. Daughter comes down
9. Son comes down and daughter goes up.
10. Mother comes down and son goes up.
11. Daughter comes down
12. Son comes down and daughter goes up.
13. Finally daughter comes down.

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
RECEPTION COMMITTEE

of

X Convention of Indian Rationalists

&

**V Kerala Yukthivadi Annual
Conference**

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XX
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A WELL WISHER

P. C. Sorcar (Jr) Challenges Sai Baba



The following are the opinions expressed and some interesting facts revealed by Mr. P. C. Sorcar (Jr) in an interview with "Sunday".

"Sai Baba is a fraud". He is a magician who does not admit to being one. I would challenge any so-called godman to have his power tested by me. One meeting would be sufficient to expose him. Sai Baba is more than a fraud. He is exploiting people's psychology in an age of science and reason. Everything on earth is so scientific and reasonable. To make things appear unreasonable by so-called

miracles, which are no more than magical acts is cruel. It disturbs human psychology. In any case, if he claims to be a superman, why could he not do anything about the cyclone in Andhra Pradesh? It is his home State. Incidentally, I was on Professor Narasimhaiah's committee to investigate the powers of Sai Baba.

"I had an interesting meeting with Sai Baba. I first tried to meet Sai Baba, introducing myself as P. C. Sorcar Jr. I was not given an appointment. Then I tried meeting him as a boy named Jahar (my nickname) and was granted an appointment. On meeting Sai Baba I pretended to pay my respects to him and even touched his feet. Sai Baba then produced a sandesh by waving his hands in the air, a simple case of 'palming'. As Sai Baba offered it to me I waved my hands in the air and produced a rasagolla. Sai Baba did not like that at all and shouted out in horror. I then told him coldly, "I am P. C. Sorcar Jr. You do the same thing as I do. You are a magician and so am I. We will meet again" and quietly left the room". The myth about the ash or the vibhuti from Sai Baba's pictures should also be explained. If you rub some lactic acid crystals on a picture and leave it for some time, you will find that the picture is full of the so-called vibhuti. It is all scientific trick. Sai Baba has agents everywhere who do this. They rub the pictures they distribute with lactic acid and also rub perfume over them. The people are left to draw their own conclusions."